

the very big CAVE adventure

ABOUT THIS PROGRAMME

If I were to tell you that you are holding in your hands the very first computer adventure, you wouldn't believe me.

You wouldn't say so, of course, because I am still holding the ripe tomato from the other side of this bit of paper. But you wouldn't believe me.

And you'd be wrong.

Way back at the dawn of computing history, enshrouded by the mists of time, (or perhaps it was just J*ck Tr*mi*'s cigar smoke), there was a computer game called simply "Adventure". It didn't need any other name because there were no other computer adventures. It was set in a complex of very big caves which were called simply the Very Big Caves for similar reasons.

Things were simple in those days, as you can see. But nothing could be quite as simple as the minds of the people who wrote the adventure. Indeed there are many who would argue that simple was too mild a term and that something more expressive was needed such as "cretinous", or perhaps "criminally moronic".

I shall leave others to debate these finer points of language. The gist is that this adventure was sillier than any computer programme has a right to be. If it had been a chap rather than a length of cassette tape, people would have rung for the men in white coats on sight.

Those snuffy individuals who think that adventures are superior to "mindless alien-zapping" obviously never played this one. When it comes to sheer unadulterated mindlessness, this programme leaves all the arcade games at the starting post wondering what happened.

Even The G***t Sp*ce R**e.

Strong men who devote their whole lives to telling people how useful and valuable computers are freeze in their tracks at the mere mention of this programme.

Well, you catch my drift. It is the kind of programme which gives computers a bad name. Come to that, it is the kind of programme which gives idiots a bad name. So you won't be surprised to learn that, in the interests of the good name of computing, the game was banned.

The original programmers were persuaded that it would be in the interests of their health not to publish the adventure. They were offered a certain sum of money to part with all rights to the adventure. It was an offer they couldn't refuse.

Then a couple of programmers were offered a contract to produce a new sensible version of the game. In return they were given a fresh start in life. Clean records. New names. The names were C***ther a*d W***ds.

So everything ended well. The original game was buried deep. The good name of computing was saved.

Or so it seemed.

Some years later, however, the original game was unearthed by a St. Bride's pupil. Like so many great discoveries it was made by pure accident. The girl had been innocently hacking into a computer system owned by a major American government agency with a view to diverting the payment of the British national debt into her personal account. She came to an area deep within the system which was so rigorously protected by security codes that she felt sure that this must be where they kept the boodle. What she in fact found were the contents of this tape.

Let there be no misunderstanding. We are well aware that the publication of this tape may deal a blow to the reputation of computing from which it could take decades to recover. Nobody could be more concerned with the good name of computing than ourselves, so it is with much heartsearching that we have weighed one consideration against another. On the one hand it was the good name, perhaps the very future of computer technology. On the other was the chance of a fast buck.

It just wasn't a contest.

We proudly present to the public in general and to you in particular The Very Big Cave Adventure.

INSTRUCTIONS

To load The Very Big Cave Adventure press **CTRL** and **Enter**.

In this game the computer understands most simple English sentences "**EAT THE FOOD**", "**BREAK THE DOOR DOWN**" etc.

The game loads in two parts. At the end of part one you will be asked to save your position. This must be done to tape or disc (not RAM). You will then be asked to load the position in at the beginning of part two. This will enable you to carry with you all the objects you wish to take from part one as well as all the money you have made up to that point.

Several special commands are used in the game:

INVENTORY (or **I**) will list list the things you have with you.

EXAMINE will allow you to take a closer look at almost any object in the game - make frequent use of this command.

SAVE and **LOAD** allow you to save your position to tape or disc. There is also a special facility which allows you to save position instantaneously into the computer's memory. To do this just type **SAVE** or **LOAD** as normal and answer RAM to the prompt "Tape, disc or RAM?"

TEXT and **GRAPHICS**. Every location in this game is illustrated. If you prefer a text-only adventure just type "**TEXT**". Type "**GRAPHICS**" to turn the graphics back on.

The Very Big Cave Adventure was written with The Quill, The Illustrator and lots of N*scafé.

